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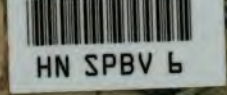

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OLD ENGLAND

AND THEIR HISTORY

BY

CLYDE AND BLACK

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY BENNETT

NEW YORK

PRINTED FOR CLYDE AND BLACK

(At the Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass.)

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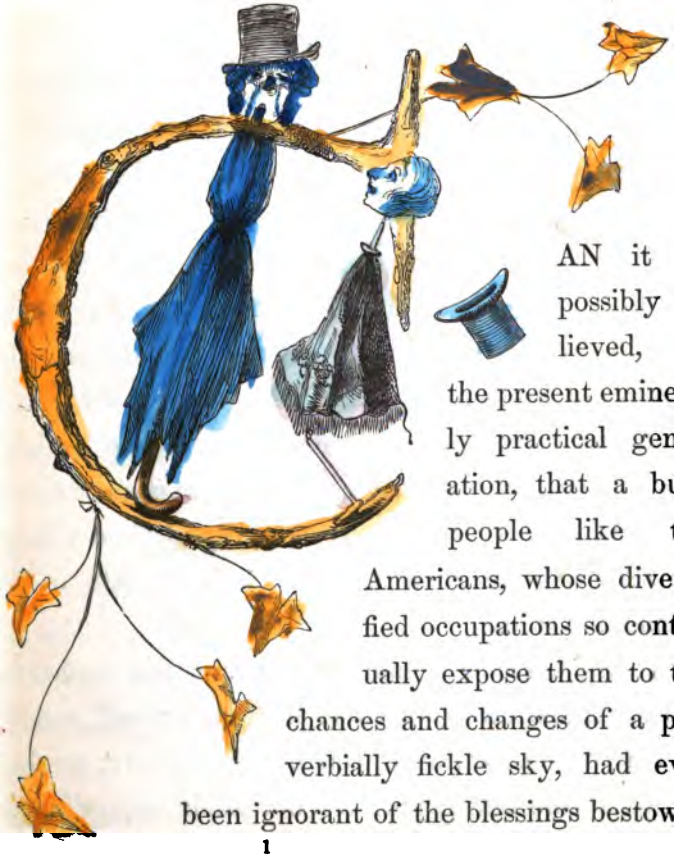
CHAPTER I.

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE UMBRELLA.



CAN it be possibly believed, by the present eminently practical generation, that a busy people like the Americans, whose diversified occupations so continually expose them to the chances and changes of a proverbially fickle sky, had ever been ignorant of the blessings bestowed

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on them by that dearest and truest friend in need and indeed, the UMBRELLA? Can you, gentle reader, for instance, realize to yourself the idea of a man not possessing such a convenience for rainy weather?

It is true that some young men, of irregular minds and erratic habits, affect to scoff at those soberly wandering individuals, who, grateful for the services vouchsafed by the Umbrella, rank it among the dearest and most indispensable of their household possessions. But we care not for their jest and their ridicule; while we have the proud satisfaction of numbering them, at a later date, among the most steadfast adherents of the formerly despised article, which they, once sobered down by experience and domesticity, carry with a conscious dignity, most fully compensating for their previous lack of faith in its manifold virtues.

In fact, there is a something about the Umbrella which stamps its bearer with a peculiar, and, surely, we may call it exalted character. Such men, we feel certain at the first glance, are not addicted to dissipa-

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tion, nor do they yield to the seductions of the Casinos. They are essentially family-men; and just as the *bâton* is the symbol of the field-marshal, the club the emblem of our police, so is the Umbrella the distinguishing mark of the respectable *paterfamilias*.

Strange to say, it is a fact, melancholy enough, but for all that too true, that our forefathers, scarce seventy years ago, meekly endured the pelting of the pitiless storm without that protection vouchsafed to their descendants by a kind fate and talented inventors. The fact is, the Umbrella forms one of the numerous conveniences of life which seem indispensable to the present generation, when so long a time has passed since their introduction that the contrivances which, in some degree, supplied their place previously, have passed into oblivion.

We feel the convenience we possess, without being always aware of the gradations which intervened between it and the complete inconvenience of being continually unsheltered from the rain, and having no

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kind friend from whom to seek that protection so ardently desired.

Fortunately a very simple process will enable the reader to realize the fact in its full extent; he need only to walk about in a pelting rain-storm for some hours without an Umbrella, or, when the weight of a cloak would be insupportable, at the same time remembering that fifty years ago a luxury he can now purchase in almost every street was within the reach of but very few, while omnibuses and railroads were unknown.

But perhaps we are a little harsh on our worthy ancestors; they possibly possessed some species of protection from the rain on which they prided themselves as much as we do on our Umbrella, and regarded the new-fangled invention, as they no doubt termed it, as something exceedingly absurd, coxcombical, and unnecessary; but we, who are in the possession of so many life-comforts of which those of the good old times were so supremely ignorant,—and among them we give the Umbrella brevet rank,—can afford to

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smile at such ebullitions as we have come across in those books of the day we have consulted, and to which we shall presently have an opportunity of referring.

We can happily estimate the value of such a friend as the Umbrella, the silent companion of our walks abroad, a companion incomparably superior to those slimy water-proof abominations so urgently recommended to us; for, at least, the Umbrella cannot be accused of injuring the health as *they* have been, as it appears, with very good reasons. In fact, so long as the climate of Yankeedom remains as it is, so long will Umbrellas hold their ground in public esteem; and we do not believe that the clerk of the weather will allow himself to be bribed into any alteration, at least for trade considerations.

Another remarkable proof of the utility of the Umbrella may be found in the universality of its use. It has asserted its sway from pole to pole, and is to be met with in every possible variety, from the Napoleon-blue silk of the Parisian exquisite to the

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coarse red or green cotton of the Turkish rayah. Throughout this continent and in Europe, it forms the peaceful armament of the peasant; and no more curious sight can be imagined than the wide, uncovered market-place of some quaint old German town during a heavy shower, when every industrial covers himself or herself with the ægis of a portable tent, and a bright array of brass ferules, and all conceivable hues which cotton can be made to assume, without losing its one quality of "fast color," flash on the spectator's vision.

The advantages of the Umbrella being thus recognized, it must be confessed that it has hitherto been treated in a most ungrateful and step-motherly manner. We fly to the Umbrella when the sky is overcast,—it affords us shelter in the hour of need, —and the service is forgotten as soon as the necessity is relieved. We make abominable jokes upon the Umbrella; we borrow it without compunction from any confiding friend, though with the full intention of never returning it; in fact, it has often been a

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matter of surprise to us that any one ever does buy an Umbrella; and yet, for all that, we treat it with shameful neglect, as if ashamed of the crime we have committed, and anxious to conceal the evidence of our guilt.

Let us, then, strive to afford such reparation as in our power lies, by giving a slight description of THE UMBRELLA AND ITS HISTORY, and making up for any deficiencies of our pen by the artist's pencil.

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CHAPTER II.

ANCIENT HISTORY OF UMBRELLAS.

THE Umbrella is derived from a stately family,—that of the Parasol; the legitimate use of the Umbrella, though sufficiently obvious, being almost ignored in those countries whence it derives its being.

It may not be amiss to make a few remarks here

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as to the origin of the word Umbrella. The English name is borrowed from the Italian *Ombrella.* The Latin term *Umbella* is applied by botanists to those blossoms which are clustered at the extremities of several spokes, radiating from the common stem, like the metallic props of the Umbrella. For instance, the parsley is called an umbrelliferous plant. The term, as is seen, does not give the slightest idea of the use of the article so designated, as is often the case with words we practical folk employ; and we might well take a lesson from our friends, the Germans and French, who have invented names for that used to ward off the rays of the sun and that employed against the rain, namely,—Regenschirm (Rain-shade), *parapluie* (to ward off rain); Sonnenschirm (Sun-shade), *parasol* (to ward off the sun).

In "Martial's Epigrams" there are frequent allusions to the Umbrella, as for instance (xi. 74):—

"Umbellam luscæ, Lygde, feras Dominæ."

And again (xiv. 28):—

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"Accipe quæ nimios vincent umbracula soles,
Scilicet et ventus te tua vela tegent." *

It will be noticed from the above extracts that the

* For the benefit of country gentlemen, we applied to a celebrated poet of the spasmodic school to furnish metrical versions of the above lines. This is a specimen of a fortnight's lucubrations: —

"Be ever doomed, thou miserable fellow,
To bear thy purblind mistress's umbrella."

It is needless to add that we did not trouble him for any more.

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Umbrella does not appear to have been used among the Romans as a defence from the rain; and this is curious enough, for we know that the theatres were protected by a *velarium*, which was drawn across the arena whenever a sudden shower came on. Strange that this self-evident application of the Umbrella should not have occurred to a nation generally so ingenious in the invention of every possible luxury. Possibly the expense bestowed in the decoration of the *Umbraculum* was a reason for its not being applied to its legitimate use.

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CHAPTER III.

THE UMBRELLA IN MODERN TIMES.

AS a further illustration that Umbrellas were used in Italy prior to their introduction into France, we find a confirmation in old Montaigne, who observes (lib. iii. cap. ix. 17): —

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"Les Ombrelles, de quoy depuis les anciens Romains l'Italie se sert, chargent plus le bras, qu'ils ne deschargent la teste."

The absence of all allusion to the Umbrella by

the wits of the seventeenth century, while the muff, fan, etc. receive so large a share of attention, is a further proof that it was far from being recognized

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as an article of convenient luxury at that day. The clumsy shape, probably, prevented its being generally used. In one of Dryden's plays we find the line —

"I can carry your umbrella and fan, your Ladyship."

Gay, addressing a gentleman, says, —

"Be thou for every season justly dress'd,
Nor brave the piercing frost with open breast:
And when the bursting clouds a deluge pour,
Let thy surtout defend the gaping shower."

And again: —

"That garment best the winter's rage defends
Whose shapeless form in ample plaits depends;
By various names in various countries known,
Yet held in all the true surtout alone.
Be thine of kersey fine, though small the cost,
Then brave, unwet, the rain, unchilled the frost."

These passages lead us to the belief that Umbrellas were not used by gentlemen for a long time after its merits had been recognized by the fair sex. Pursuing our quotations, we find an allusion to the Umbrella, as employed by ladies, in Gay's "Trivia": —

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"Good housewives all the winter's rage despise,
Defended by the ridinghood's disguise:
Or, underneath th' Umbrella's oily shed
Safe through the wet on clinking pattens tread."

Dean Swift, also, in the "Tatler," No. 228, in describing a city shower, thus alludes to the common use of the Umbrella by women:—

"Now in contiguous drops the floods come down,
Threatening with deluge the devoted town:
To shops, in crowds, the draggled females fly,
Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy:
The Templar spruce, while every spout's abroach,
Stays till 't is fair, yet seems to call a coach:
The tucked-up sempstress walks with hasty strides,
While streams run down her oiled umbrella's sides."

That the use of the Umbrella was considered far too effeminate for man, is seen by the following advertisement from an English paper, the "Female Tatler" for December 12th, 1709:—

"The young gentleman borrowing the Umbrella belonging to Wills' Coffee House, in Cornhill, of the *mistress*, is hereby advertised, that, to be dry from

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head to foot on the like occasion, he shall be welcome to the *maid's* pattens."

Defoe's description of Robinson Crusoe's Umbrella is, of course, familiar to all our readers. He makes our hero say that he had seen Umbrellas used in Brazil, where they were found very useful in the great heats that were there, and that he constructed his own instrument in imitation of them. "I covered it with skins," he adds, "the hair outwards, so that it cast off the rain like a penthouse, and kept off the sun so effectually, that I could walk out in the hottest of the weather with greater advantage than I could before in the coolest." We may also add, that, from this description, the original heavy Umbrellas obtained the name of "Robinson," which they retained for many years.

It is recorded in the life of the venerable English philanthropist, Jonas Hanway, the friend of chimney-sweeps and sworn foe to tea, that he was the first man who ventured to dare public reproach and ridicule by carrying an Umbrella. He probably felt the

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benefit of the Umbrella during his travels in Persia, where they were in constant use as a protection against the sun. It was more than probable, however, that Jonas Hanway's neatness in dress and delicate complexion led him, on his return from abroad, to appreciate a luxury hitherto only confined to the ladies. Mr. Pugh, who wrote his life, gives the following description of his personal appearance, which may be regarded as a gem in its way:—

"In his dress, as far as was consistent with his ideas of health and ease, he accommodated himself to the prevailing fashion. As it was frequently necessary for him to appear in polite circles on unexpected occasions, he usually wore dress-clothes with a large French bag. His hat, ornamented with a gold button, was of a size and fashion to be worn as well under the arm as on the head. When it rained, a small *parapluie* defended his face and wig."

It is difficult to conceive how the Umbrella could have come into general use among the old Knickerbockers, owing to the state in which the sidewalks

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of New York were up to a comparatively recent period.

It is not easy to convey to a person who has not seen the streets of New York City before they were uniformly paved, a tolerable idea of their inconvenience and uncleanliness, the signs extending across both sidewalks into the street, at unequal distances from the houses, and unequal heights from the street, that they might not intercept each other's view; and, what is of more consequence in a crowded city, prevented the free circulation of the air. The footpaths were universally incommoded, even where they were so narrow as only to admit one person passing at a time, by a row of posts set on edge next the carriage-way. He whose urgent business would not permit of his keeping pace with the gentlemen of leisure before him, turned out between the two posts before the door of some large house into the carriage-way. When he perceived danger moving toward him, he wished to return within the protection of the row of posts; but

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there was commonly a rail continued from the top of one post to another, sometimes for several houses together, in which case he was compelled to run back to the first inlet, or climb over, or creep under the railing, in attempting which he might be fortunate if he escaped with no other injury than what proceeded from dirt; if, intimidated by the danger he escaped, he afterwards kept within the boundary of the posts and railings, he was then obliged to put aside the travellers before him whose haste was less urgent than his, *and these resisting, made his journey truly a warfare.*

The French are reproached, even to a proverb, for the neglect of the convenience of foot-passengers in their metropolis, by not providing a separate path for them; but as great as is the exposure to dirt in Paris, for want of a footpath, which their many *portè cochères* seem likely forever to prevent, in the more important article of danger the City of New York was, in its early ages at least, on a par with this. How comfortless must have been the sensations

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of an unfortunate vrouw, stopped in the street, on a windy day, under a large old sign loaded with lead and iron, in full swing over her head, and perhaps a torrent of rain and dirty water falling near her from a projecting spout ornamented with the mouth and teeth of a dragon. Those dangers and distresses are now at an end; and we may think of them as a sailor does of a storm which has subsided; but the advantages derived from the present uniformity and neatness can be known only in their full extent by comparing them with former inconveniences.

When to this description is added the fact that the ancient hoop-petticoat, and another article of dress used by the ladies for prohibiting a too free use of the atmosphere by preventing the expansion of the lungs, monopolized the whalebone, it will be seen how much had to be got over before any Umbrella could be carried by the citizens of New York, as a walking-stick, with satisfactory assurance of protection in case of a shower. The earliest Umbrellas, we must also remember, were made of oiled silk, very

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clumsy and difficult to open when wet; the stick and trimmings were heavy and inconvenient, and the article very expensive.

Hence it was long even in England ere the Umbrella became an article of general use, which is strikingly confirmed by an anecdote we derive from that amusing repertory of facts, — "Notes and Queries," published in England. Mr. Warry, many years English Consul at Smyrna, described to a friend the envy and astonishment of his mother's neighbors at Sawbridgeworth, in Hertfordshire, where his father had a country-house, when he ran home and came back with an Umbrella he had just brought from Leghorn, to shelter them from a pelting storm which detained them in a church-porch after the service on a summer Sunday. Now, as this occurred about the year 1775 or 1776, and Sawbridgeworth was so near London, it is plain that Umbrellas at that time were almost wholly unknown.

Since this date, however, the Umbrella has come into general use, and, in consequence, numerous im-

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provements have been effected in it. The transition to the present portable form is due, partly, to the substitution of silk and gingham for the heavy and

troublesome oiled silk, which admit of the ribs and frame being made much lighter; and also to the many ingenious mechanical improvements in the

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framework, chiefly by French and English manufacturers, many of which were patented. And our country has not been behind in its manufacturing of Umbrella and Parasol frames, of which we intend to speak more fully hereafter.

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CHAPTER IV.

STORY OF THE PARACHUTE.

IN giving an account of the Umbrella, it would not be right to omit mentioning another and far from legitimate use in which it has been employed by notoriety-hunting *artistes*, — we allude to the Parachute; and a short narration of its origin and progress may not be uninteresting to our readers.

The Parachute commonly in use is nothing more nor less than a huge Umbrella, presenting a surface

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of sufficient dimensions to effect a resistance by the air, capable of arresting the otherwise accelerated velocity of descent, and preventing the consequent shock to the aëronaut. Consequently, in the East, the Umbrella has been occasionally employed by vaulters, to enable them to jump safely from great heights. Father Loubère, in his curious account of Siam, relates that a person famous in that country for his dexterity used to divert the King and Court by the extraordinary leaps he took, having two Umbrellas, with long slender handles, fastened to his girdle.

Blanchard was the first person who constructed a Parachute, to act as a safety-guard to the aëronaut in case of any accident. During an excursion he made from Lille, in 1785, when he traversed, without stopping, a distance of three hundred miles, he let down a Parachute, with a basket fastened to it, containing a dog, which he suffered to fall from a great height, and which reached the ground in safety.

The first Parachute descent, however, was made

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by Jacques Garnerin, on the twenty-second of October, 1797, in the Park of Monçeau. De la Lande, the celebrated astronomer, has furnished a detailed and highly interesting account of this foolish experiment.

Garnerin resided in London during the short peace of 1802, and made two ascents with his balloon, in the second of which he let himself fall from an amazing height with a Parachute. After cutting himself away, he floated over Marylebone and Somers' Town, and fell in a field near St. Pancras Old Church. The oscillation was so great that he was thrown out of the Parachute, and narrowly escaped death. The next person that tried the dangerous experiment was his niece, Eliza Garnerin, who descended several times in safety. Her Parachute had a large orifice in the top, in order to check the oscillation, and this appears to have been tolerably successful.

The next experimentalist was a person of the name of Cocking, who ended his days in a manner unworthy his talents, through a series of lamentable

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mistakes. His Parachute was constructed on the opposite principle, of a wedge-like form, and was intended to cleave through the air, instead of offering a resistance to it. It has not been proved that the principle was wrong, but the defect lay in the weakness of the materials employed in the formation of the Parachute.

On the 29th July, 1837, Mr. Cocking ascended in his new Parachute, attached to the Great Nassau Balloon. Mr. Cocking liberated himself from the balloon, the Parachute collapsed, and fell, at a frightful rate, into a field, near Lea, where poor Cocking was found, with an awful wound on his right temple. He never spoke, but died almost immediately afterwards. It is much to be regretted that the descent was allowed to take place. The aëronauts themselves were for some time in a state of imminent peril. Immediately the Parachute was cut away, the balloon ascended with frightful velocity, owing to the ascending power it necessarily gained by being freed from a weight of nearly 500 pounds; and had

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it not been that the aëronauts applied their mouths to the air-bags previously provided, they must have been suffocated by the escaping gas. When the reaction took place, the balloon had lost all its buoyancy, and fell, rather than descended, to the ground.

Mr. Hampton was the next person who attempted the experiment, and made three descents in a Parachute, in succession, without injury. Undeterred by the awful fate of his predecessor, this gentleman determined on making a Parachute descent which should prove the correctness of the theory, and the Montpelier Gardens, at Cheltenham, were selected as the scene of the exploit. Owing to the censure which was attached to the proprietors of the Vauxhall Gardens, for permitting Cocking's ascent, the owners of the Gardens at Cheltenham would not suffer the experiment to be made, and Mr. Hampton was obliged to have recourse to stratagem. As he was permitted to display his Parachute in the manner he intended to use it, the idea suddenly flashed across his mind that he would carry out his long-

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nursed wishes. He suddenly cut the rope which kept him down, and went off, to the astonishment of the spectators; the last cheering sound that reached him being,—"He will be killed, to a dead certainty!"

After attaining an altitude of nearly two miles, Mr. Hampton proceeded to cut the rope by which he was attached to the balloon. He paused for a second or two, as he remembered it would be soon life or death with him, but at length drew his knife across the rope. The first feelings he experienced were both unpleasant and alarming; his eyes and the top of his head appeared to be forced upwards; but this passed off in a few seconds, and his feelings subsequently became pleasant rather than disagreeable.

So steady and slow was the descent that the Parachute appeared to be stationary. Mr. Hampton remembered that a bag of ballast was fastened beneath the car; he stooped over and upset the sand; he also noted by his watch the time he occupied in descend-

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ing. The earth seemed coming up to him rapidly, the Parachute indicated its approach to *terra firma* by a slight oscillation, and he presently struck the ground in the centre of a field, where he was first welcomed by a sheep, which stared at the visitor from the clouds in utter amazement.

Mr. Hampton repeated the experiment twice in London, though on both occasions with considerable danger to himself: the first time falling on a tree, in Kensington Gardens; the second, on a house, which threw him out of the basket.

After this experiment there was a lull in the Parachute folly until recently, when Madame Poitevin startled the Metropolis of England from its propriety by her perilous escapes both in life and limb. Although considerable ingenuity was displayed in the plan of expanding the Parachute by the sudden discharge of gas from the balloon, still, the very fact of a woman being exposed to such danger by her husband, except under certain peculiar circumstances not within our province to enumerate, which might possibly

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justify an attempt at such a mode of disposal by her, will, we trust, prevent Americans from countenancing such an exhibition by their presence.

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CHAPTER V.

UMBRELLA STORIES.

WE have found in the course of our reading a variety of anecdotes relating to the Umbrella, which, although not appertaining strictly to its history, may be possibly regarded in the light of *Mémoires pour servir;* we have, therefore, ventured to dedicate one chapter of our little book to the subject.

In the year 1782, a Mr. Jamieson, a surgeon of

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Glasgow, brought with him, on his return from Paris, an Umbrella, which was the first ever seen in that city, and which attracted universal attention, and a vast amount of impudence from the "horrid boys." The following anecdote, which we borrow from a Scotch paper, most probably refers to the same period, or thereabouts:—

"When Umbrellas first marched into Blairgowrie, they were sported only by the Minister and the Laird, and were looked upon by the common class of people as a perfect phenomenon. One day Daniel M—— went to Colonel McPherson, at Blairgowrie House; when about to return, a shower came on, and the Colonel politely offered him the loan of an Umbrella, which he gladly accepted, and Daniel, with his head two or three inches higher than usual, marched off. Not long after he had left, however, the Colonel again saw Daniel posting towards him with all possible haste, still o'ertopped by his cotton canopy (silk Umbrellas were out of the question in those days), which he held out, saluting him with,—'Hae,

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hae, Kornil, this'll never do; there's nae a door in a' my house that'll tak it in: my verra barn-door winna tak it in!''

In that veracious history of Sandford and Merton, if our memory serves us right, there is an instance quoted of remarkable presence of mind relating to an Umbrella and its owner. The members of a comfortable picnic party were cosily assembled in some part of India, when an unbidden and most unwelcome guest made his appearance in the shape of a huge Bengal tiger. Most persons would, naturally, have sought safety in flight, and not stayed to hob-nob with this denizen of the jungle; not so, however, thought a lady of the party, who, through her innate courage, or else fear of losing her dinner, perhaps both combined, seized her Umbrella, and opened it suddenly in the face of the tiger as he stood wistfully gazing upon the dinner of the affrighted picnic party. The astonished brute turned and fled, and the lady saved her dinner.

Not many years ago, the Umbrella was employed

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in an equally curious manner, though not so successfully as in the former case. In the campaign of 1793, General Bourbonville, who was sent with four commissioners by the National Convention to the camp of the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, was detained as a prisoner, with his companions, and confined in the fortress of Olmütz. In this situation he made a desperate attempt to regain his liberty. Having procured an Umbrella, he leaped with it from a window forty feet above the ground, but being a very heavy man, it did not prove sufficient to let him down in safety. He struck against an opposite wall, fell into a ditch, and broke his leg, and, worse than all, was carried back to his prison.

One of the most remarkable instances on record, in which the Umbrella was the agency of a man's life being saved, occurred, according to his own statement, to Colonel ——. Of course, our kind readers know him as well as we do, for not to do so "would be to argue yourselves unknown." At any fashionable watering-place, the Colonel or one of

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his family — for it is a large one — can be met with. He is, indeed, a wonderful man; on intimate terms with all distinguished families of the country, always speaking of them by their Christian names. He is at once the guide, philosopher, and friend of every stranger who happens to form his acquaintance: a very easy task, be it remarked; and, though so great a man, he is not above dining at your expense, and charming by the terms of easy familiarity with which he imbibes your champagne, for all is alike to him as long as he is not to pay for it.

Well; the other day we happened to meet the Colonel, and he speedily contrived to discover that we were on the point of going to dine, and we invited him to share our humble meal, as a grateful way of making a virtue of necessity; for, had we not done so, he would have had no hesitation of inviting himself. During dinner, conversation, of course, turned upon the one all-engrossing subject, the war, and the Colonel proceeded to give us his

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experiences and his many wonderful escapes while on the Peninsula campaign, and how he did n't take Richmond; and, among his other wonderful exploits, he related to us his miraculous escape by an Umbrella.

It appeared that while at Fortress Monroe, he had gone out with one of his friends on a yachting excursion in the noted waters of Hampton Roads, when, a storm arising, they were compelled to put into that small island known as the Rip-Raps, where the Government were erecting new fortifications; when they went on shore, hoping thus to escape the storm by waiting until it abated. The Colonel, on the Lucretian principle of *Suave mari magno*, etc., proceeded to make an inspection of the works, and to observe from the top of the Fort the magnificent prospect of a sea running mountains high. As it was raining at the time, he put up a huge gingham Umbrella he happened to have with him. Suddenly, however, a furious blast of wind drove across the island and lifted the Colonel bodily in the air. Away he flew

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far out to sea, the Umbrella acting as a Parachute to let him fall easy.

Now to most men it would have been a choice of evils, — a progress from Scylla to Charybdis; not so to our Colonel. On coming up to the surface after his first dip, he found that swimming would not save him; so he quietly emptied out the water contained

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in the Umbrella, seated himself in it, and sailed triumphantly into Fortress Monroe, like Arion on his dolphin.

Our face, on hearing this anecdote, must have betrayed the skepticism we felt, but the Colonel proceeded to a corner of the room and produced the identical Umbrella. Of course, such a proof was irresistible, and we were compelled to do penance for our unbelief by calling for another bottle of wine. For we thought the anecdote cheap at any price.

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There is a story told of one of our city bankers, that he owed an excellent wife to the interposition of an Umbrella. It appears that on returning home one day in a heavy shower of rain, he found a young lady standing in his doorway. Politeness induced him to invite her to take shelter under his roof, and eventually to offer her the loan of an Umbrella. Of course the gallant banker called for it next day, and the acquaintance thus accidentally made soon ripened into mutual affection. This species of Umbrella courtship has been immortalized in song, of which we will venture to quote a verse or two.

It appears that a certain Simon and the lady of his affections were walking out one day, and the swain had long wished to reveal his love, but his innate modesty had prevented him. The desired opportunity was thus afforded:—

"It so occurred, as they did walk
And viewed each vale so flowery,
As Simon by her side did stalk,
Declared the sky looked showery:
The rain came to her like a drug,

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When loudly he did bellow:
'Look here, my love, we can be snug,
I've brought my Umbrella!'"

Simon, taking advantage of the situation, is emboldened to snatch a kiss from the ruby lips of his *inamorata*, for which offence, *contra bonos mores*, he was thus punished:—

"She blushed. The rain went off, and he
The Umbrella closed for draining:
'Oh, don't,' says she, 'I plainly see
It hasn't left off raining.'"

The process is so peculiarly pleasing to both parties concerned, that Simon soon gains her consent to become his bride, and—

"The wedding-morn, no time to waste,
He rose before 't was yet day;
And, just as if to please his taste,
It was a shocking wet day.
They married were, had children dear—
Eight round-faced little fellows;
And, strange to relate, the whole of the eight
Were marked with Umbrellas!"

Who would be without an Umbrella, when it may

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possibly lead to the enjoyment of such an hour of bliss as that which Simon enjoyed during the rain? Suppose, for instance, he had not been so foresighted as to buy an Umbrella, would his wishes have been so speedily crowned with success? We trow not.

We have also been able to preserve a precious relic of an ancient ditty, though, unfortunately, we have not been able to complete it. The verse to which we allude appears to be the opening stanza. We draw our readers' attention more especially to the happiness of the rhyme, and the apparent elasticity of English words to accommodate themselves to any circumstances: —

"I met her in Broadway,
A-taking of a walk;
I something then did say,
While I to her did talk.
I held my Umbe-e-rell-ow
To shield her from the rain;
Says she, 'Begone, you fellow!'
And turned down Maiden Lane.

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CHORUS.

"Oh, this love, this love, this love,
Will lead me to disgrace:
For Miss Love, my pretty dove,
Shut the door slap in my face!"

We are unable to state whether the course of true love ran smooth in this instance, but from the apparent lamentable nature of the ditty we are afraid we must decide in the negative.

A worthy little Frenchman of our acquaintance was ordered by his medical man to take a course of shower-baths. Such things being unknown to him in his fatherland, he, of course, found the first essay remarkably unpleasant, but with native ingenuity he soon discovered a remedy. On our asking him how he liked the hydropathic system, he replied: — "Oh, mais c'est charmant, mon ami; I always take my parapluie wid me into de bath."

The Umbrella has been most successfully introduced on the stage. What, for instance, would Paul Pry have been without that valuable implement for which to inquire, with his stereotyped, "Hope I don't

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intrude?" Mrs. Gamp, again, with her receptacle for unconsidered trifles, cannot be realized apart from her Umbrella. And then, again, those hired waiters who come into our houses with an Umbrella of grace-

ful proportion, and emerge towards the small hours with a most plethoric parapluie, which looks as if it had been regaling in the good things as well as its master. What, again, would the ex-King of the French have been without *his* Umbrella,—that huge

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mass of gingham which was so familiar to Parisian visitors in the hands of the Citizen-King; or the Iron Duke, whose Umbrella always formed a part of his personal belongings?

It used to appear a comical sight, in that same city of Paris, to see the National Guard going to exercise with a musket in one hand and an Umbrella in the other; and we dare say it was a very sensible plan after all, and might have been imitated with success in the swamps of the Chickahominy.

This circumstance, too, may throw light on a hitherto obscure passage in Macbeth, where Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane; for it 's just possible that the soldiers cut down the branches to serve them as a protection from the rain. We throw out this hint to Mr. Edwin Forrest.

In Germany, on the other hand, a soldier is strictly forbidden from carrying an open Umbrella, unless he is accompanied by a civilian or a lady. A worthy corporal, on one occasion, was sent to fetch an Umbrella his Major's lady had left at a friend's house,

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and at the same time took her lap-dog for an airing. On the road home a violent shower came on, and, to avoid committing a breach of the regulations, the Dutchman tucked the dog, as the lady's representative, under his arm, put up the Umbrella, and marched comfortably to barracks.

With one more characteristic anecdote we close our budget. One evening, while Rowland Hill was

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preaching, a shower came on, and his chapel was filled with devotees. With that peculiar sarcastic intonation, which none could assume so successfully as himself, he quietly remarked, "My brethren, I have often heard that religion can be made a *cloak*, but this is the first occasion on which I ever knew that it could be converted into an *Umbrella*."

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CHAPTER VI.

THE REGENERATION OF THE UMBRELLA.

OUR task is now nearly completed. We have described the history of the Umbrella, as far as our space permits us to treat of this interesting subject. (Of the Parasol we intend hereafter to give a short history, and the many different styles and varieties that have been used for the past years.) All that remains for us to do is to give an account

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of the principal improvements effected in the Umbrella during later years.

The principal object of all those who have devoted their attention to the task was to reduce the weight of the Umbrella, without, at the same time, diminishing its strength. In its primitive form the ribs were formed of whalebone, and, in the cheaper article, rattan, made to imitate whalebone as nearly as possible, both of which possessed very grave inconveniences. In the first place, they were cumbersome to a degree, lost their elasticity after any continuous exposure to the rain, and if dried without very great care, they were liable to crack and warp. In the next place, their price was getting very high, and, consequently, the masses were liable to remain unrepresented in the Umbrella market. The most important improvements date back from the introduction of steel frames, which took place about twenty years ago, although a few Umbrellas were occasionally made and used of this material prior to that time, but had not come into general use.

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Simple as the construction of the Umbrella may appear to be, the number of patents that have been granted within the last thirty years have been enormous, and a small book might be written on them, so it is of no use to attempt, in our small space, to more than mention a very few of the various improvements in their manufacture. With very few exceptions, the inventors have not been repaid the cost of their patents. This has arisen, partly, from the delicacy of the mechanical construction of Umbrellas, unfitted for the rough usage to which they are exposed; but chiefly in consequence of the increased cost of manufacture not being repaid by the improvements effected.

The introduction of steel *vice* whalebone was opposed by the trade and the public in general, like many other great improvements; and it required several years in order to convince purchasers that steel would not only last much longer than whalebone, but not be so liable to break, provided it was properly made and tempered. The misfortune was,

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that, at the outset, a great number of inferior articles were introduced, through which the public naturally lost confidence; and it demanded great exertions, on the part of the more respectable members of the trade, ere the merits of the new invention were recognized. At present, it is generally allowed that a good steel-rib Umbrella can be as easily procured as a carefully tempered razor or sword.

Mr. Fox's English Paragon frame, simple in its construction, half of the weight of whalebone, but equally strong, is admitted to be the greatest improvement yet introduced in the manufacture of an Umbrella. The ribs are made in the form of a trough with flat sides, by which shape the greatest amount of strength is obtained. The same principle, as well known, has been successfully applied in the construction of the great tubular bridge over the Menai Straits, from which Mr. Fox took the idea.

The Paragon Umbrella, an English invention, has, until recently, secured a liberal demand, which, however, has been superseded by the American steel

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frames. The successful introduction at home of the American steel frame has been owing chiefly to the increased tariff on the imported article; next, to the high rate of exchange: both of which, added to the foreign manufactures, prices have so increased the cost to the American consumer as to amount to almost a prohibition of the article. Brother Jonathan, however, has shown a commendable independence of Cousin John, as several enterprising companies have attempted, with varying success, to supply the home-market with a steel frame equal, if not superior, to the best imported article.

The *most*, we might almost say the *only*, successful American manufacturers of steel frames are [redacted]. [redacted], Black & Co., of New York, with which one of this firm is identified, being also the first American company to attempt the steel-frame manufacture. To such perfection has their elaborate machinery been brought, so perfectly systematized and economical their *modus operandi*, enabling them to produce an almost faultless article at a price so far below the

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English exporter, that the latter can now scarcely be styled a competitor; while the steel frames of [redacted] Black & Co. have obtained such a reputation among the trade and popularity throughout the country, that they have nearly superseded every other and are universally used.

The superior advantage of the steel frame over the obsolete whalebone is apparent in the fact, that, so far as our knowledge extends, repairing of frames since the introduction of the former has fallen off about twenty-five per cent.

One of these steel frames, with a good silk or alpaca cover and ivory handle, is the neatest and most durable article yet worn by Jonas Hanway or any of his successors.

The weight of the Umbrella having been thus reduced, the next question was, whether some amendment could not be made in the covering of the Umbrella. For the last fifty years, Umbrellas have only been covered with two materials, — silk and cotton; and the want of some substance which would resist

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the great friction and consequent wear that an Umbrella undergoes, formed a subject of anxious attention both to European and American manufacturers.

Several fabrics were tried without success, until one called *Alpaca* presented itself, for which a patent was immediately taken out. Its merits may be judged of from the following remarks from the Grand Jury Report of the Great Exhibition of all Nations, held at London in 1851:—

"Alpaca cloth is made of the undyed wool of the Peruvian and Chili sheep, and it is therefore not liable to fade, nor is it acted upon by salt water; hence Alpaca Umbrellas are much used at watering-places."

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HISTORY OF THE PARASOL.

CHAPTER I.

In writing the History of the Parasol we shall be as brief as possible, in consequence of the lengthened sketch of the Umbrella which we have just closed and left outside to drain off.

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The Parasol, however, dates back to the earliest ages; some commentators on the Bible fancying they can discover it in places where a shade protecting from the sun is mentioned. This is not unlikely, (for see fourth chapter of Jonah,) but it is certain that the Parasol has been in use from a very early period.

Chinese history goes still further, and places the invention of these elegant articles many thousand years anterior to the *Mosaic* date of the world's creation. The antiquity of the Parasol, however, among the Hindoos is more satisfactorily proved by the following passage from the dramatic poem of "Sacontâla."

"The cares of supporting the nation harass the sovereign, while he is cheered with a view of the people's welfare, as a huge Parasol, of which a man bears the staff in his own hand, fatigues while it shades him. The sovereign, like a branching tree, bears on his head the scorching sunbeams, while the broad shade allays the fever of those who seek shelter under him."

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The origin of the Parasol is wrapped in considerable obscurity: some profound investigators have supposed that large leaves tied to the branching extremities of a bough suggested the first idea of the invention. Others assert that the idea was probably derived from the tent, which remains in form unaltered to the present day. Dr. Morison, however, tells us that the tradition existing in China is, that the *San*, which signifies to shade off the sun, originated in standards and banners waving in the air. As this is a case in which we may quote the line,—"Who shall decide when doctors disagree?"—we may with safety assume that all are right, and that the Parasol owned its origin to all or any of the above-mentioned fortuitous circumstances.

As the materials of which the Parasol was composed were heavy, it was generally carried by an attendant. The indefatigable Layard tells us that "the Parasol was generally carried over the King in times of peace, or on some occasions in war. In shape it resembled very closely those now in common use,

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and was generally ornamented at the summit with a flower, or some other decoration. On the later Assyrian bas-reliefs a long piece of embroidered linen or silk, falling from one side like a curtain, appeared to screen the King completely from the sun. The Parasol was reserved exclusively for the monarch, and is never represented as borne over any other person."

In Egypt, again, the Parasol is found of various shapes. In some instances it is depicted as a fan of palm-leaves, or colored feathers, fixed on a long handle. Sir Gardner Wilkinson, in his work on Egypt, has an engraving of an Ethiopian Princess travelling through Upper Egypt in a chariot: a kind of Umbrella fastened to a stout pole rises in the centre, bearing a close affinity to what are now termed wagon Umbrellas.*

* We are bound to say a few words with reference to the illustrations of the bas-reliefs, which may possibly run counter to, and in some measure shock, the preconceived notions of our readers. It will be seen that they do not exactly resemble the Assyrian monuments that were in our Egyp-

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In Persia the Parasol is repeatedly found in the carved work of Persepolis; and Sir John Malcolm has

tian Museum, but that is entirely the artist's fault; we proposed to him to proceed to Persepolis, Egypt, and Assyria, for the express purpose of copying them, and he would have done so, could we have borrowed or procured for him the mammoth balloon that was exhibited here a few years ago, as the one in which the owner was to cross the Atlantic, for he spurned every ignoble mode of locomotion. But as that could not "eventuate," we permitted him to draw on his imagination, in the hope that the reader will feel equally well satisfied with the result.

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an elaborate article on the subject in his "History of Persia." At Tachti-Bostan, in the vicinity of Persepolis, there is a *bas-relief* representing a chief witnessing a boar-hunt, with a large Parasol over his head, — the man's, not the boar's.

From a regal luxury in Asia and Africa, the Parasol naturally migrated to Greece and Rome. The Parasol, called the σκιάδιον, was borne over the head of the infant Dionysus in the great festival of the Panathenæa at Athens, and the daughters of aliens were compelled to carry Parasols over the heads of the maidens of the city. Its use was probably confined to females, and we find in Pausanias the following line: —

θεράπαινα δὲ αὐτῇ προέστηκε σκιάδιον φέρουσα.

It was also called θολία, from θόλος, an arched roof or cupola; and Eustathius calls it ἀνθήλιον. It is curiously represented on Etruscan vases.

At Rome it was the custom for effeminate men to defend themselves from the heat by means of the

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Umbraculum, formed of skin or leather, and capable of being lowered at will. We find frequent reference to the *Umbraculum* in the Roman classics, and it appears that it was, probably, a post of honor among maid-servants to bear it over their mistresses. Ovid, in his "Art of Love," advises a lover to undertake the office: —

"Ipse tene distenta suis umbracula virgis."

Claudian speaks of its golden decorations: —

"Aurea submoveant rapidos umbracula soles."

De 4 Cons. Honor.

Juvenal notices its green color, Sat. IX.: —

"En cui tu viridem umbellam, cui succina mittas."

In all eastern countries, with the exception of China and Turkey, the Parasol was reserved exclusively for the great men of the land, and, consequently, its manufacture must have formed a very comfortable monopoly, and the title of Court-Parasol Maker must have been rather an unnecessary distinction. In

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China, however, the Parasol is borne by every native of the celestial land, and in Turkey the Parasols of European manufacture are generally found. But even in the state, distinction appears to be maintained in some degree, for no one is allowed to pass the palace without lowering their Parasol or Umbrella.

> "Let Persian dames the Parasols display,
> To guard their beauties from the sunny ray,
> Or sweating slaves support the shady load,
> When eastern monarchs show their state abroad."

The Parasol, however, enjoys its full honors in Ava, where its use is the exclusive right of the King, who styles himself, in his correspondence with foreign potentates, King of kings, to whom all kings should be obedient, he being friend and near kinsman to all the gods in heaven and earth, by whose regard for him all animals are nourished and preserved, and all the seasons have their constant return. He is brother to the Sun and Moon, and the stars are his

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near relations. He is lord of the ebbing and flowing of the sea, King of all the white elephants, and Lord of the twenty-four Parasols.

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CHAPTER II.

As a canopy of state, Parasols were generally used in the South of Europe; they are found in the ceremonies of the Byzantine Church; they were borne over the Host in procession, and formed part of the Pontifical regalia.

The general use of the Parasol in France and England was adopted probably from China, about the middle of the seventeenth century. At that period, pictorial representations of it are frequently found, some of

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which exhibit the peculiar broad and deep canopy belonging to the large Parasol of the Chinese government officials borne by native attendants.

John Evelyn, in his "Diary" for the 22d June, 1664, mentions a collection of varieties shown him by one Thompson, a Catholic priest, sent by the Jesuits of Japan and China to France. Among the curiosities were "fans like those our ladies use, but much larger, and with long handles strangely carved and filled with Chinese characters," which is evidently the description of the Parasol.

In the title-page of Evelyn's "Kalendarium Hortense," also published in the same year, we find a Black Page represented, bearing a closed Parasol. It is again evident that the Parasol was more an article of curiosity than use at this period, from the fact that it is mentioned as such in the catalogue of the *Museum Tradescantiandum*, or Collection of Rarities, preserved in South Lambeth, near London, by John Tradescant.

In "Coryat's Crudities," a very rare and highly inter-

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esting work, published about a century and a half prior to the general introduction of the Parasol into England or France, we find the following curious passage: —

"Also many of the Italians doe carrie other fine things of a far greater price, that will cost at least a duckate, which they commonly call in the Italian

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tongue *Umbrellas*, that is, things that minister shadow unto them, for shelter against the scorching heate of the sun. These are made of leather, something answerable to the form of a little canopie, and hooped to the inside with divers little hoopes, that extend the Umbrella in a pretty large compasse. They are used especially by horsemen, who carry them in their hands when they ride, fastening the ende of the handle upon one of their thighs: and they imparte so long a shadow unto them, that it keepeth the heate of the sun from the upper part of their bodies."

In the English Exhibition of all Nations, in 1851, was exhibited the splendid Parasol belonging to his Highness the Maharajah of Najpoor. The ribs and stretchers, sixteen in number, divided the Parasol into as many segments, covered with silk, exquisitely embroidered with gold and silver ornaments. The upper part of the design was complete in each department, but at the lower it was formed into a graceful running border, to which a fringe was attached.

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The handle was hollow, and formed of thick silver plates.

In this connection we will notice the fact that in the capitals of Europe certain merchants plume themselves on being honored by Royal customers, and

pride themselves on the distinctive permission of placing on their signs, "Patronized by the Royal Family." In this country, where every citizen is a

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sovereign, the honor may not be so obvious; yet no less exalted than the Transatlantic monarch is the chief magistrate of a free people, of whom we may say, "Behold the man whom the sovereigns delight to honor." We, therefore, claim our share of distinction, in being patronized for the last few years by the esteemed lady of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States.

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CHAPTER III.

THE PARASOL IN MODERN TIMES.

THUS far we have traced the history of the Parasol as it was "in ye ancient times," and, as we promised, wherein we might fail with the pen, we would endeavor to make amend by the artist's pencil: how well we have performed our task remains with our indulgent readers to say. We now propose to describe the various Parasols used in New York during the last half-century.

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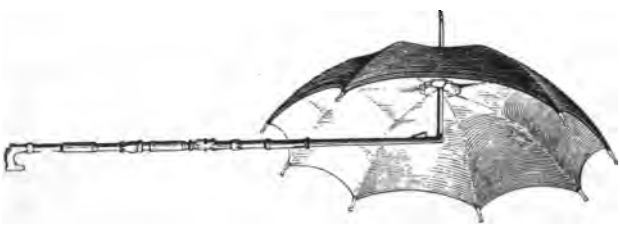
Who has not seen in the old homestead the relic of his great grandame's huge, clumsy parasol, with its brocade-silk, long white fringe, and heavy-jointed handle, elaborately carved with Chinese designs, the whole producing and exhibiting an amount of muscular development in the bearer, undiscoverable by the physiological student of their fair granddaughters.

Fringe having performed its mission, and the liege lords being satisfied of their spouses' robustness, no further necessity existing for continuing the muscular experiment, the parasol-frame was soon lightened and covered with silk, plain except the border, of various patterns and styles. This improvement was of course highly appreciated by the ladies, and continued long fashionable.



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About the year 1838, all former styles, from being shades, became overshadowed by the introduction of the article technically known as a *Sunshade*, the top turning forward by a jointed handle, the edge of the cover assuming a perpendicular instead of a horizontal position: it was carried so as to repel the inquisitive gaze of Paul Pry, while at other times it was compelled to perform the functions of an *impromptu* fan. About the time of the introduction of the Sunshade, a circumstance occurred which nearly upset both the gravity and gayety of Broadway. A jolly chap, an acquaintance of ours, dropped in, and was ridiculing the new-fangled shade, when we offered him one *free gratis for nothing* if he would carry it in professional style, from our store, near the City Hospital, to Niblo's Garden and back. He performed the feat, encountering the gaze of every serious peripatetic, and the huzzas of a crowd of faithful ragamuffins.

The Sunshade was eventually nearly superseded by the style of Parasol known as Canopy-top, whose

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gracefully curving lines were copied from the Oriental roof of the Chinese pagoda. This style became, from the innate taste for graceful curvature, an especial and universal favorite, and ruled the fashion for several years throughout the United States.

The following were styles that found much favor with the ladies: — Medium-size Parasol, curtain edge, with fringe three inches deep, lining white, covered principally with Moire Antique.

Scolloped fringe, lined with variegated silk, edge of lining scolloped, and forming a curtain.

The richest and most expensive style of Parasol was introduced by us in 1857, consisting of a plain silk cover of various colors, covered with French lace, made expressly to fit the Parasol. The demand increasing for yet greater richness, and consequently greater expense, we have for the last three or four years covered these with the finest thread lace, and sold them at from eighty to one hundred and twenty dollars each. For a full-dress Parasol, this style is still in request.

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Two years since we introduced a handsome Parasol; usually black silk cover, with various designs wrought on the cover with beads, very rich, but somewhat objectionable on account of its weight. This and a variety with plain silk cover and fancy stitching near the edge, have constituted the leading styles for the last two years.

For 1864 we intend to introduce, at our new establishment, 683 Broadway, corner of Amity Street, an entirely new style of Parasol; in the mean time we beg the ladies to exercise a little patience while they repress their ungratified curiosity.

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CLYDE & BLACK,

IMPORTERS AND MANUFACTURERS

OF

UMBRELLAS, PARASOLS, CANES, ETC.

NO. 683 BROADWAY,

CORNER OF AMITY STREET,

NEW YORK.

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